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RECORD OF THE

STEVENS FAMILY

PRESENTED TO

CHARLES TRACY STEVENS

AND

EMELINE M. UPSON

BY

OLIVER STEVENS.

1844.

Reprinted from the original documents by H. WALES LINES,
MERIDEN, CONN., March, 1893.

CHARLES TRACY STEVENS,

Unto you is this old manuscript most respectfully presented,
 not for the intrinsic value thereof, but as a memorial to be
 handed down to the latest posterity, that each
 one may see from whence he derived
 — his pedigree, —

And here follows the regular line Family of Stevens:

TIMOTHY STEVENS, born in Bristol, Wales.

JOSEPH STEVENS, born in Hartford, Conn., in 1705.

ELISHA STEVENS, born in Glastenbury, Conn., in 1752.

OLIVER STEVENS, born in Waterbury, Conn., 1782.

CHARLES TRACY STEVENS, born in Edmonston, N.Y., in
 1818.

TO MISS EMELINE M. UPSON.

This is most respectfully presented by her grandfather Oliver Stevens, fourth son of Elisha Stevens, who was five years in the revolutionary war, and was in the battle of Monmouth under Gen. Washington, and in the battle of the Brandywine under Gen. LaFayette, and under Gen. Washington at the taking of Lord Cornwallis at York Town, which secured the independence of the United States of America, and was in several other small engagements throughout the Colonies of Great Britain. He emigrated from Glastenbury, Conn., and was the eleventh son of Joseph Stevens, who was born in Hartford, Conn., but settled in Glastenbury, and was the third or fourth son of Timothy Stevens, who emigrated from Bristol, England, with three brothers, and landed in Boston, and was the first orthodox minister that was ever settled in Hartford,* as will be found in the late history of Connecticut, and who de-

*Probably error of writer. Barber's History, page 520, says: Timothy Stephens, first minister at Glastenbury, ordained October —, 1693. Died April 16th, 1725.

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~~Preserved~~

scended from an ancient family in Wales, who by deeds of valour under the reign of King Alfred became entitled to a coat of arms, which were (but I am not certain) a gold emerald shield with cross swords and a tasseled ———.

This is but a small part of the memorandum of Elisha Stevens' services in the army of the revolution of 1776, which planted the tree of liberty, whose branches in my humble opinion will extend in the course of 150 or 200 years to the earth's remotest bounds, by which time all nations will have tasted of the blessed fruits thereof, and become completely renovated.

This manuscript having never been discovered until after the death of the author, my father, which was in March 1813, and then it was so little thought of, that the heirs slung it into an old chest of drawers among some old writings which were considered to be of no value, and I, living in the state of New York at the time, had no knowledge of it until twenty years after. The Congress of the United States then having passed a law that all widows after 1833, of deceased husbands, should, by procuring sufficient evidence, draw half that their husbands were receiving when they were discharged from the army of the revolution. When the law was first enacted the rest of the heirs thought it to be impracticable, and when I was informed of the fact I immediately commenced my operations, and after a few days' or two weeks' hard toiling and grubbing my mother happened to recollect something about this book, and search was immediately made for it; and as illegible as it is and as poorly spelt, and, no doubt, much of it written in a hurry and bustle of a camp ground, it proved to be worth (with some other small testimony that is that she was married to my father in the time of the revolution) a little more than five hundred dollars, and as poor as it was written and as illegible and as unintelligible as it may appear to those who are not interested with the contents, it may be a sort of satisfaction to those descendants who are fond of and are undoubtedly right to feel a sort of pride to be able to trace their pedigree to the country from which they took their migration. It is a gratification to me at this late day to think that I

have (unlike many Yankees) taken the pains, and can trace my pedigree as far back, I think, as any other man in this country, with tolerable degree of certainty, and I never have found but one of my name who was capable of doing it any further back than the third generation. But my principal object, which is to transfer to my posterity the active part which my father and several of his brothers took in the hard struggle for that liberty which they and I sincerely hope under God may enjoy until the end of time; it appears that my father began a journal, and for the want of time or several causes that interfered, he never was able to complete it, for he was in land service five years, and was not discharged until the fighting was all over, which was in 1782, and peace was ratified in 1783.

I will now write, as near as my memory serves (which I think is in no way impaired), the history of my father's services as related to me, and not only to me directly, but a great many long evenings I have sat in one corner of the fire-side and listened to their tales of hardship and some of their forced marches; they would talk over with as much glee as if they had been on a party of pleasure, and then again the extreme suffering that they witnessed and endured themselves, especially the fifth year of the war when by desertions and other distressing causes our army was reduced to about fifteen hundred (while the enemy had twenty thousand) effective men and then without food and clothing; there they would talk over with a great deal of feeling. When war was declared my father and three of his brothers, viz: Samuel, Joseph and Ashbell, went on board of different privateers. Ashbell was a lad of fourteen years old, was taken prisoner and carried to Halifax, and was never afterward heard from. Joseph, in the course of the war, was taken prisoner and died on board of the Jersey prison ship at Wallabout, where our navy yard now is on Long Island. Samuel, I believe, continued privateering more or less through the war, and at last became master of a vessel. My father, coming off from a cruise, landed at New London, hearing of the death of his wife and his youngest son Oliver (after whom I was named), returned home to Glastenbury on the Connecticut river, settled his affairs, left directions

about his two little surviving boys, Elisha and David, and enlisted into the land service during the war; and as it respects the battle of the Brandywine, what he has neglected in writing, I shall make up the deficiency as I received it verbally from his own mouth, after I had arrived to the stature of a man. The British landed here under cover of their cannon, which was loaded with canister, grape and chain shot, together with bomb shells, plowing in every direction. Gen. LaFayette commanded and led his men into action in solid columns, and the fire took such effect that it would cut a swarth right through and sweep down whole companies as it were in an instant, upon which our men could close and fill up the vacancy and in an instant have the same fate; the General got wounded and our army retreated. This has the name of being the hardest fought battle, according to the duration of time, of any during the whole course of the war. The next, which was the battle of Germantown, does not vary much from what I have heard him relate, except that Gen. Stevens paid too much attention to an old church which was of but little consequence, as it contained but about 250 British and Tories, and by which means he lost the victory and his reputation. The next, in June, 1778, was the battle of Monmouth, of which I perceive he has but a small sketch. As I have heard him in conversation with other old soldiers who were in the action, that the day after Gen. Lee commenced the attack, the action became general, and was strongly contested through the day until both sides were overcome with heat and so exhausted that they left the field of battle, and neither gained the victory; and further I don't recollect much about him, except he was some time at West Point, sometimes skirmishing about in the Middle States under LaFayette or Count DeKalb, and the last and great movement he was under Washington at Kingsbridge, who was at that time rallying all his forces at different stations contiguous to New York, as though he was going to make a desperate rush to retake it from the enemy, as it was then in their possession, and to carry out his design more complete he had letters intercepted which fell into the hands of the enemy which confirmed their opinion that this was his intention, and the time arrived when every thing was properly arranged; every man was ordered under

arms at sundown and crossed the Hudson river above New York in the night, and the next morning at daylight they were all under way for Yorktown in Virginia, where lay Cornwallis with the flower of the British army in America, and Count DeEstang, according to previous arrangements, had left Rhode Island with the French fleet, and arrived in the Chesapeake the day previous to the arrival of Washington with his army by land, so that they were now prepared to make a simultaneous attack upon the enemy, both by land and sea. They fought one day with the enemy, and the evening found them loosing ground, and plead for an armistice for the term of thirty days; but there was but twenty-four hours allowed, for Washington did not mean to allow Cornwallis an opportunity of obtaining reinforcements from Lord Howe who then was in New York with a large army and a powerful fleet. The enemy improved every moment of these twenty-four hours in making additions to their fortifications, but as soon as they were up the French fleet opened a heavy fire upon them, and Gen. Washington attacked them with heavy artillery and small arms at every vulnerable point by land, which in the course of half a day of hard fighting his Lordship thought it most prudent, however mortifying it was, to surrender to the despised rebel Yankees, as he had formerly pleased to call them; on making out the terms of surrender his Lordship requested one indulgence, that is, that they should not be compelled to march out of their own encampment under the tune of "Yankee Doodle," as this was a tune composed by the British as a disgrace to the Yankees; but Gen. Washington left that to his generals to decide upon, and they agreed that they should be favored with the tune, as it was of their own composition, and one that they had much delighted in. Thus fell fourteen thousand of his Britannic Majesty's troops into the hands of the Americans, together with all their arms, ammunition and baggage, and what of the British fleet there was, were surrendered to the French. This was the finishing stroke of eight years of hard struggle for liberty, and your grandfather, Elisha Stevens, had as much to do with it as any other man, according to his capacity, for he was seven long years in the service of his country both by sea and land and

after the ratification of the treaty of peace he was honorably discharged at West Point and returned home. Much unlike very many young men, who, when they enlist into the army, go in with unblemished characters but when they return home they will have imbibed all the bad habits of a soldier's life; but when he and those of his brothers (John, Elijah, David and James) who survived the tug of war, returned with unblemished characters, excepting my uncle Elijah, he was somewhat given to drink, but I suppose died a reformed man. My uncle Peter he was in the army, but being young he stayed at home to raise produce, but after the war he settled in Vermont, raised a large family and became very rich. Uncle Thomas had not much to do with the war, but was very useful in ship-building at Glastenbury and he had two sons that were also in the same business. My uncle Daniel had lived in Philadelphia from the time he was fourteen years of age, had followed the Liverpool trade until he had become immensely rich, and when the British took Philadelphia, he had two heavy ships and a wholesale store of goods, all of which fell into the hands of the enemy; but after the war, he, together with his sons, soon recovered and became men of wealth. Uncle Elijah moved from Glastenbury (which I have as yet omitted to mention, is the native place of my grandfather and all my uncles on my father's side) to Vermont where he raised a family of boys, and some of them, I understand, have done well. Uncle Samuel, after accumulating a handsome property by seafaring, settled in Lanesborough, Mass., raised three sons; and they were men of first class. Uncle James moved to Lowville, N. Y., where he raised two sons. Uncle Joseph, who died on board of the prison ship, I think left two sons, and, for what I know now, live in Glastenbury. My uncle John moved to Sandersfield, Mass., and, I think, every one of my uncles were professors of religion, and were all firm supporters of good society and well established republican government. My father was a man six feet in height, well proportioned and of undaunted courage, and commanded respect amongst all classes of people of every age and was very fond of giving good advice to young people of both sexes, was very liberal to the poor, but in this

case he was careful not to let his left hand know what his right hand did. He was a firm supporter of the preaching of the gospel and very public spirited and was for more than twenty years in some public business; he was very systematic in his family, which was large, for he commonly had eight or ten besides his own children. His hours of devotion were regularly attended, both night and morning, and holy time, twenty hours, was strictly kept for the Sabbath by his family, apprentices, journeyman and the stranger that was within his gates. He was deacon of the Congregational Church for about thirty years. He carried on the largest business of tanning, currying and shoe making of any man in the county of New Haven, and, I believe, of any in the state. He was somewhat illiterate, but of a powerful mind. Besides raising a large family, he accumulated a handsome property. He had three children by his first wife: Elisha, who settled in Lowville, N. Y., and had three sons and one daughter; David, who settled in his native town, Waterbury, and had three sons and five daughters; Oliver, who died an infant. By his second wife he had eleven children, eight sons and three daughters, viz: Oliver (which is myself), Ashbell, Rebecka, Ransom, Barzilla, Milton, Clarissa, Hershall, Harvey, Alfred, Minerva, all of whom lived to have families but two, Barzilla and Harvey, the oldest of which till he was sixteen, and me and our children are all scattered about the State, except David and Ashbell they settled in their native town, Waterbury; but some of their children have moved to Alabama and four of Ashbell's have gone to Cincinnati, Ohio.

I must be excused, in my haste I have omitted one other engagement my father was in which was a severe one, under Gen. Gates at Camden with Lord Cornwallis, and which Gates lost by mismanagement, and with it all the glory and honor he had acquired by taking Burgoyne and his ten thousand men at Saratoga, at the northward; so, of course, his northern laurels dwindled into southern willows. And now, Charles Tracy, as you are my fifth and youngest son, and I cannot do by you as I would were it in my power, I take some satisfaction in leaving this behind me with you as a sort of legacy, not for any in-

trinsic value but as a memorial that your ancestors had the honor of taking an active part in the great struggle for that liberty we are now enjoying, and which your descendants down for generations to come, no doubt, notwithstanding the rough appearance of this old manuscript, will esteem to be worth possessing, some on account of its antiquity, and some on account of its information they can receive from, as it respects their pedigree, and from what country they came from on the other side of the great waters. I myself was born in Waterbury, New Haven county, Connecticut, and am the fourth son of Elisha Stevens, who was born in Glastenbury, Conn., and was the fifth son of Joseph Stevens who was born in Hartford, and, if I am not mistaken, he was one of seven or eight sons (now I am coming to where I do know from all old writings which are now extant in some parts of the State unless they have been lost). Timothy Stevens who was the first orthodox minister that was ever settled in Hartford, Conn., as I have seen from some of my ancestors' writings, and it is also mentioned in one of the histories of Connecticut, and my father had some books, such as law books, etc., that his grandfather Timothy brought from England, that was printed in the reign of Queen Anne, King James the Second. This my great-grandfather, Timothy Stevens, was one of three brothers who came over from Bristol in Wales into Boston. One by the name of Samuel settled in New Hampshire. Joseph, the third, was a sea-faring man and married in Boston. My great-grandfather received his education at the famous University in Oxford, England. These three brothers were the descendants of an ancient family in Wales, where but a few years ago stood the ruins of an ancient castle in the time of the feudal system, when each great Lord had his particular coat of arms, and as many armed tenants as his estate would with princely dignity maintain. The Stevens coat of arms were an enameled shield, a brawny arm with an uplifted broad sword, tasseled hurlbent, and the head, neck and shoulders of a horse, well caparisoned. And now all these descendants who shall for ages to come feel anyways interested in this little narrative,

I do not hesitate in the least in affirming that the foregoing is substantially true (although somewhat abridged), and as I received it from my father, and some books belonging to my great-grandfather, printed in England.

OLIVER STEVENS.

A. D. 1844.



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